Communicable Disease Branch Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Weekly Key Points

May 12, 2020

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) Communicable Disease Branch will be releasing COVID-19 weekly key points that includes information discussed on the weekly Tuesday Local Health Department call. As guidance changes, please use the most recent information provided. For questions, contact the NC DPH Communicable Disease Branch 24/7 Epidemiologist on Call at **919-733-3419**.

Important updates
- **NEW/Update: CDC [Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control FAQs for COVID-19](#)** includes infection control recommendations in a psychiatric or behavioral health facility

Upcoming Events
- **Thursday, May 14th 10–11am: COVID-19 Update for Long Term Care Settings**
  NC DPH has reinitiated COVID-19 webinars for long-term care settings. We intend for these calls to be held weekly. Please share the webinar log-in information with facilities in your respective jurisdictions.
  > Link to join Webinar: https://zoom.us/j/99794997344 [zoom.us]
  > Office telephone: (312) 626-6799 or (646) 558-8656
  > Webinar ID: 997 9499 7344
  > iPhone one-tap: +13126266799,,99794997344#

Outbreaks

Please continue to conduct the following steps to notify NC DPH of clusters of cases and outbreaks:

1. Use the outbreak worksheet or call Epi On Call to inform NC DPH of clusters and outbreaks
2. Send the worksheet to CDoutbreakworksheet@dhhs.nc.gov
3. Enter any updates about outbreaks into NC EDSS rather than via email

NC EDSS
Outbreak numbers in the results package are cumulative and should reflect the total number of cases associated with the outbreak, including associated cases that reside in other jurisdictions. Please be sure to:
- Link all cases associated with an outbreak to that outbreak event, and
- If you are investigating a case associated with an outbreak in another county, link it to the outbreak and share the event with the county that owns the outbreak

If a COVID-19 death needs to be linked to an outbreak, the following steps in NC EDSS should be taken:
1. Classify the COVID-19 death as a Coronavirus disease event
2. Link the event to the outbreak
3. After the disease event has been linked to the outbreak, change the classification to a Coronavirus death
Lastly, when information is obtained on race and ethnicity for a case, please remember to update these data in NC EDSS.

Infection Prevention Guidance

Infection Prevention Toolkit
NC DPH has developed an infection prevention toolkit for LHD use during outbreak investigations in long-term care settings. This toolkit is similar to the infection prevention toolkit created for long-term care settings, and includes the following:
- An infection control assessment
- Instructions on how to conduct an infection control assessment
- Admission considerations for facilities experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak
- Emergency resource request guidance

When ready, the toolkit will be available on the NC DHHS webpage and the online CD Manual.

Remote Consultation
NC DPH is partnering with CDC and the North Carolina Statewide Program for Infection Control and Epidemiology (NC SPICE) to conduct remote infection prevention and control consultation with skilled nursing and other long-term care settings across the state. NC DPH will be using the infection control assessment tool that is in the infection prevention toolkit previously described. This assessment and consultation will support facilities in implementing recommended infection prevention and control practices and protocols.

Contact Tracing

The Carolina Community Tracing Collaborative (CCTC) has identified approximately 30 candidates for the 10 regional supervisor positions and are in the process of interviewing them now. Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) hopes to have those positions filled by May 15. Once hired, one initial priority will be for the regional supervisor to introduce themselves to all LHDs in the regions they will cover to better understand what, if any, current surge staffing needs exist.

CCNC requests that counties to notify them about any current staffing needs and if possible, identify projected staffing needs for the next 2-4 weeks. This will help make sure they are hiring contact tracing staff in the regions/counties where there is current or short-term anticipated need. LHDs can email any of the below email addresses to submit current (or anticipated) staffing needs:
- cctc-staffing@communitycarenc.org
- Christina Page (cpage@communitycarenc.org)
- Wendy Sause (wsause@communitycarenc.org)

NC AHEC will have contact tracing training completed and accessible on their website for LHDs on May 18.
- As of May 11, CCNC has hired 64 contact tracers.
- These contact tracers are scheduled to start training through AHEC on May 13.
- We are anticipating the first cohort of contact tracers will be available on May 18.

A date for CCTC software training has not been set. NC DPH anticipates testing the configured software to make sure it fits our needs by end of this week. This will allow NC DPH to initiate scheduling training of CCTC and LHD staff next week.
- On May 11, a survey was sent to LHDs asking them to identify staff that you would like to have access to the CCTC software – https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JHVMVWB [surveymonkey.com]
- A short-term interim process for assigning contacts to a tracer and documenting their activity will need to be developed at the local level.

NC DPH will be looking for assistance from LHD communicable disease staff in training the contact tracers assigned to them on how to be successful at field visit/safety techniques. Ideally, we would like to take advantage of any opportunity for newly assigned contact tracers to shadow CD staff perform field visits when they present, if county staff are amenable.

COVID-19 Surveillance

NC DPH continues to enroll new ILINet providers for COVID-19 surveillance. More information about how providers can enroll can be found here. The COVID-19 Weekly Surveillance Report which looks at trends in COVID-like illness from our syndromic surveillance system can be found on the NC DHHS website.

Later this week, NC DPH will distribute a memo on the multisystem inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID-19 in children. This memo will provide information on reporting these cases.